



IOWA'S TANF 2-GEN INITIATIVE

PILOT IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Iowa Department of Human Rights
Iowa Workforce Development
Iowa Department of Human Services

2019 - 2020

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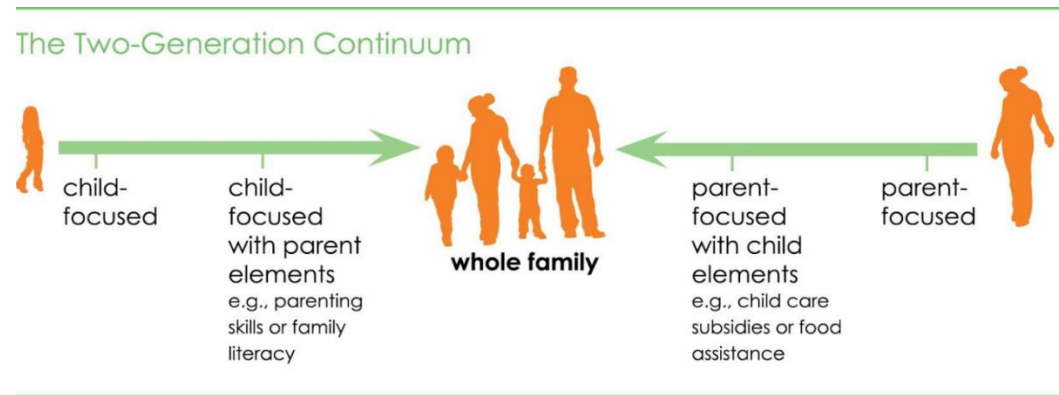
INTRODUCTION

Recent research confirms the critical role that parents play in their children’s healthy development - that a child’s success is intimately tied to his or her parents’ capacity to overcome obstacles (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013). Human service systems across the country are using this knowledge to inform the development of 2-Gen approaches - supporting parents to improve family stability and self-sufficiency, while providing their children high quality education, child care, and health care services.

A 2-Gen approach seeks to assure that programs and policies are designed and implemented with a mindset that recognizes the intersecting needs of parents and their children. Applying a “2-Gen lens” facilitates the strategic alignment of existing systems and services, allowing for a holistic approach to moving families out of poverty.

This approach does not require development of new programs or services, but does require a shift in thinking about how existing services and programs are provided. Toward that end, Iowa has engaged in strategic planning for systems change centered on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. This federal funding stream provides a constellation of services to low-income families via Iowa’s Department of Human Services (the Family Investment Program - cash assistance), Department of Human Rights (the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program – home visitation), and Iowa Workforce Development (the PROMISE JOBS program – employment readiness services).

Working in partnership with families and local service providers, these three state agencies have developed a set of strategic changes to move Iowa’s TANF system toward a whole-family approach to achieving improved outcomes. The following represents a shared plan to achieve our vision.



OVERVIEW

The following plan represents the best thinking of multiple stakeholders, including the following:

- **Families** who have participated in Iowa’s TANF system. Four family focus groups were held in May 2018 to better understand how families experience Iowa’s current system.
- **Front-line staff** tasked with serving families. Staff from the PROMISE JOBS and FaDSS programs responded to surveys and participated in joint focus groups to identify ways in which Iowa’s TANF system could be enhanced for improved family outcomes.
- **Community and agency leaders** comprising a 2-Gen Steering Committee provided critical, ongoing guidance related to the identification of key 2-Gen outcomes and overall system change strategies.

PILOT SITES

Implementation of the plan rests on program and agency leadership from the following organizations:

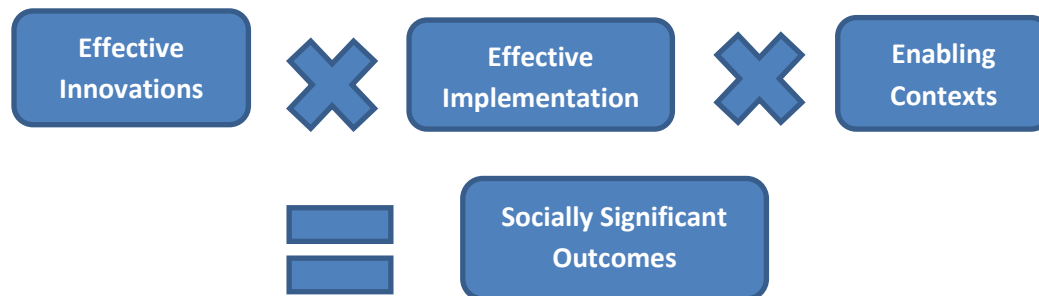
- Northeast Iowa
 - Northeast Iowa Community Action Agency
 - Operation Threshold
 - Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA)
 - PROMISE JOBS Northern Service Area
- Northwest Iowa
 - Lutheran Services in Iowa
 - PROMISE JOBS Western Service Area

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Significant support was provided to the project by the Iowa Department of Human Services and Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Drawing on the National Implementation Research Network's "Framework for Active Implementation," we reference the following formula to guide our efforts:

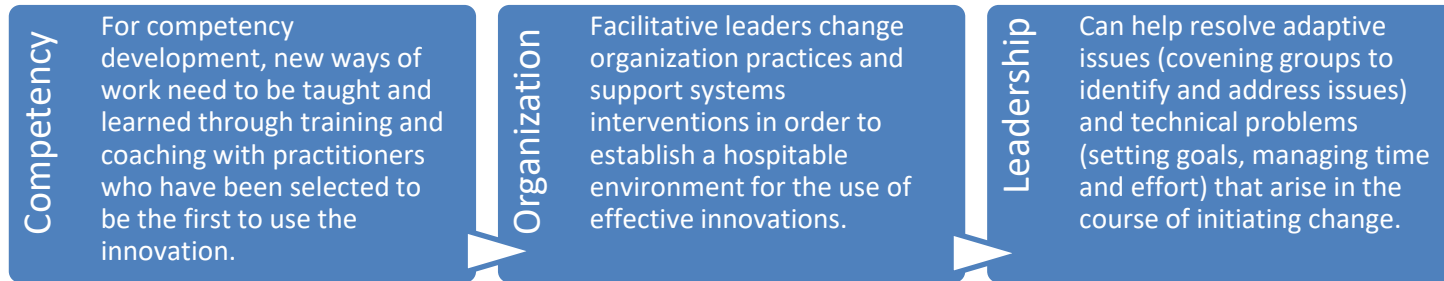


This formula involves multiplication. If any component is weak then the intended outcomes will not be achieved, sustained, or used on a socially significant scale. The Active Implementation Framework helps us to define **WHAT** needs to be done (effective interventions), **HOW** to establish what needs to be done in practice



and **WHO** will do the work to accomplish positive outcomes within our TANF system (effective implementation), and **WHERE** effective interventions and effective implementation will thrive (enabling contexts)


IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS

Attention to the critical drivers of change supports our ability to achieve measurable impact, defining successes and opportunities to scale our learning across the TANF system. These interactive processes are integrated to maximize influence on staff behavior and system culture.



2-GEN LOGIC MODEL

	Inputs & Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
 Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality childcare or early learning referrals (e.g. Head Start) • Childcare assistance • Goal setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality childcare or early learning enrollment • Progress toward goal attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued high quality childcare or early learning utilization • Goal attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased school achievement (including post-secondary) • Dev. milestones achievement • Decreased drop-out rate
 Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting and case management • Individual Job Search requirements • FSSG funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress toward goal attainment • Individual Job Search requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal attainment • Educational improvement • Change in employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree / certificate attainment • Employment stability • Income growth • Reduced food insecurity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FIP dollars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training course completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing stability
 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance abuse treatment referral Mental health treatment referral Domestic abuse treatment referral Financial literacy classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance abuse treatment enrollment Mental health treatment enrollment Domestic abuse treatment enrollment Financial literacy class completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance abuse improvement Mental health improvement Reduced domestic abuse Continued financial literacy coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved child welfare Improved family stability Asset building and financial literacy

FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES

Pilot Strategy	Operational Definition How will the strategy be implemented?	Implementation Timeframe	Implementer(s)	Metrics & Timeframe
Family Leadership Vision: Iowa's TANF system seeks to elevate family voice in policy and practice change by engaging families as leaders in multi-level decision making.	Progress to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family voice was solicited via focus groups. Progress updates were provided to focus group participants. Further, participants were invited and encouraged to connect with local pilot efforts. Guidance for local pilot sites was provided via "Family Leadership in Policy and Practice Change." The document was developed with input from parent members of the 2-Gen Steering Committee. Operational Definition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local pilot sites have defined specific strategies to engage families in ongoing family leadership activities. Lutheran Services in Iowa	Ongoing <i>May, 2018</i> <i>December/January, 2019</i> <i>January/February, 2019</i>	Local pilots; Core Team	Review metrics quarterly. # parents that attended focus groups (4 focus groups held) # families participating in family leadership activities; #activities completed to engage families by type # program / process / systems changes developed or

Foundational Training Vision: Iowa's TANF system seeks to shift the overall culture of service provision toward use of a whole-family, strengths-based approach that focuses on improved economic wellbeing and family stability for parents and children.	Core Team will develop cross-system, foundational training that incorporates both 2-Gen foundational competencies and a trauma-informed lens. Operational Definition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot site staff are connected to monthly Trauma Informed Care webinars offered by the Iowa Department of Public Health. 	January - July 2020 July 2019; ongoing	Core Team, with collaboration from local pilot sites	Review metrics quarterly. # staff trained as trainers # staff trained as end users % staff demonstrating pre-/post- changes in attitudes/beliefs
Next Steps & Timeframe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess feasibility of a whole system approach to foundational training and culture shift within three state-administered programs: Family Investment Program, PROMISE Jobs, Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program. (CT, agency leadership) Identify resources to support development/adaptation of foundational training for target audience (pilot staff). (CT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up with ICF on proposal/estimate for ACF support. Collaborate with IDPH TIC efforts. Develop a comprehensive training plan (CT & PS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify core training elements and desired competencies Identify training delivery method: train-the-trainer, in-person/webinar, etc. Identify desired training dosage/schedule (1/done or ongoing) Identify/develop plan to measure changes in attitudes/beliefs resulting from training (CT) 				

COLLABORATION

Pilot Strategy	Operational Definition How will the strategy be implemented?	Implementation Timeframe	Implementer(s)	Metrics & Timeframe
Joint Meetings Vision: Iowa's TANF system seeks to operationalize intentional collaboration among TANF programs to better serve families.	<p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint meetings will be held quarterly (at a minimum; standing date/time, when possible). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next meeting date/time will be determined and shared prior to the end of each meeting. Attendees include local front-line and supervisory staff from both PROMISE JOBS and FaDSS. Pilot areas will determine geographic scope (local or regional) for identifying attendees. <p>Agendas & Meeting Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Meeting content:</i> Development of meeting content will involve cross-program collaboration and will vary according to mutually-identified needs and priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of agenda items will be facilitated by the part(ies) that requested the item. Content may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint staffing / case management Networking / relationship-building Joint training (see further details below) <i>Agenda creation (process):</i> The agenda will be co-created by PROMISE JOBS and FaDSS leadership with input from front-line staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda requests will be provided from the attending PROMISE JOBS leadership 3 weeks prior to the meeting. Agendas will be provided to all identified attendees 2 weeks prior to the meeting. The initial joint meeting will include discussion/visioning for future meeting goals/structure/content. <i>Other meeting logistics (process)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program leadership will facilitate identifying a volunteer to record notes at each meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance will be recorded in the meeting notes. 	March 2019; quarterly through 2019	Pilot Sites (FaDSS Coordinators and PJ Managers)	# of meetings held yearly # of attendees, by program # of joint trainings # of joint family staffing / case management discussions conducted # attendees indicating improved knowledge of system # attendees indicating improved understanding of whole-family considerations / needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes will be provided to PROMISE JOBS and FaDSS leadership after each meeting and may be distributed to others as necessary. <p>Joint Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of two joint meetings per year will include an outside presentation/training. Training goals will be identified at the first joint meeting and may include the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural humility Child Care Resource and Referral Trauma-informed care Home and health needs System navigation & functions (FIP/PJ/FaDSS) FSSG: application, process, documentation 			
<p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document system learning as joint meetings are implemented (PS → Share with CT) Develop staff survey 				
<p>Data Sharing</p> <p>Vision:</p>	<p>The Core Team completed a scan of systems used to support TANF-involved families. With input from local pilot sites, priority was placed on determining system access-sharing capacity for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PJ Case WISE Iowa FaDSS <p>Access to PJ Case/Geo/WISE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek read-only access for FaDSS staff Describe screens/data fields Other system enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a system “flag” for PJ staff to prompt information sharing with FaDSS and/or indicate when a family is enrolled with FaDSS. <p>Informal information sharing enhancements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable PJ staff to accept and enter a family address change (provide email notice to IM staff). 	<p>2020</p> <p>2020</p>	<p>Core Team, feedback from pilot sites</p> <p>DHS; IWD and DHR; pilot site staff</p> <p>DHS; IWD and DHR; pilot site staff</p>	<p># of staff with access to identified systems</p> <p>Utilization rates (# of times shared systems accessed to inform family-specific services)</p> <p>Changes in LBP rates</p> <p>Changes in average number of days to complete FIP, PROMISE Jobs, and FaDSS enrollment activities</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable FaDSS staff to email notice of family address change to both PJ and IM staff. • PJ will include a copy of the PJ Self-Assessment with any referral to FaDSS. • PJ will create “childcare request form” with information PJ would need to approve childcare. FaDSS could fill out form with the family and submit to PJ. • Discontinue use of PJ Monthly Report narrative section. Provide hours monthly as currently required. <p>Current information sharing (informal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PJ provides FaDSS notice of the following as available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear Written Reminder ○ Notice of Appeal ○ Submission/approval for LBP ○ Change in status of employment/income ○ Address/phone number change • FaDSS will provide PJ notice of the following as available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Change in status of employment/income ○ Address/phone number change ○ Change in household composition ○ Barriers that affect PJ participation (as known) <p>Early Childhood Integrated Data System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FaDSS program will establish a data sharing agreement with the Early Childhood Integrated Data Resource Center at Iowa State University to inform overall pilot evaluation. 	2019	DHS; IWD and DHR; pilot site staff	
		February 2020	DHR, ECIDRC (ISU)	
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit business use case for seeking expanded, shared system access for TANF programs. (CT with input from PS). In Process. 				
<p>Referral Process</p> <p>Vision:</p>	<p>From PS meeting 12/14/18:</p> <p>Mandatory Referral Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a matrix system that gives a point to barriers. A certain number of “points” would require a mandatory referral. (Points/system TBD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possible barriers to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On a hardship ▪ In their final 12-18 months of FIP eligibility 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On FIP for the past 12+ consecutive months ▪ Homeless/impending homelessness ▪ DV ▪ No HSED ▪ Working to lift a Sub-LBP 			
<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit & refine when eligibility changes have been defined/finalized. 				

EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY

Overview

Vision

The eligibility changes outlined below apply specifically to the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program (FaDSS), and allow families to enroll in FaDSS regardless of participation in other TANF programs. Historically, families entering the TANF system experienced a “stacked door” approach to eligibility and enrollment: first, families needed to apply for cash assistance (via the Family Investment Program or FIP); next, families would be connected with PROMISE JOBS to complete a Family Investment Agreement and begin training, education, or job search activities; last, families may be identified for referral to the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program for whole-family, in-home support to address both family stability and self-sufficiency outcomes. In effect, Iowa’s 2-Gen program is the very last service families may access.

In effect, these eligibility changes remove the “stacked door” approach to 2-Gen service access for families, making it possible to enroll in FaDSS prior to applying for FIP and enrolling in PROMISE JOBS.

TANF State Plan Changes

Draft changes to the TANF State Plan were submitted on 4/8/19 and received federal approval in June 2019. Language changes identify two programs: 1) Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program and 2) **Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program for Non-FIP Families**.

The changes outlined below were implemented effective July 1, 2019 via the TANF State Plan and pilot site service contracts. State program managers have identified fiscal and outcomes tracking changes for both programs.

Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program for Non-FIP Families

State Eligibility Criteria - Enrollment

1. US Citizen
2. Iowa resident
3. Family with child under 18
4. Income at or below 175% FPL

Enrollment eligibility will be determined by proxy (families approved for LiHeap, Head Start & Early Head Start, WIC, and SNAP will be considered eligible).

State Eligibility Criteria – Ongoing/Exit Criteria

- 65% State Median Income by Family Size
- Ongoing eligibility will be assessed on an annual basis
- The LiHeap process for assessing eligibility will be adopted

Eligibility Strategies

A description of pilot-specific eligibility strategies follows. In general, however, the eligibility criteria changes outlined above allows pilot sites to determine a local approach to the following general strategies:

- Serve families that are eligible for FIP but are not enrolled (TANF-disconnected)
- Serve families at risk of TANF re-entry
- Serve families with specific barriers

Pilot Strategy	Operational Definition How will the strategy be implemented	Implementation Timeframe	Implementer(s)	Metrics & Timeframe
Vision: Iowa's TANF system, and in particular the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program, seeks the ability to serve TANF-disconnected families, assess family interest in connecting to the TANF system and provide support as identified.	<i>Lutheran Services in Iowa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will target families that meet the state-identified enrollment criteria that demonstrate at minimum 1 barrier to self-sufficiency. <i>Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will target families that meet the state-identified enrollment criteria.• Will further target families that demonstrate one or more of the following: 1) have multiple	<i>November 1, 2019</i> <i>July 1, 2019</i>	Pilot Site Leads	# families enrolled by target population # families connected to TANF/FIP Average # of eligibility category changes by type

Pilot Strategy	Operational Definition How will the strategy be implemented?	Implementation Timeframe	Implementer(s)	Metrics & Timeframe
Overview Several program-level 2Gen strategies are detailed below, with pilot site-specific timeframes and metrics identified. While the metrics included in this section tend to focus on output measurements, each pilot site has identified short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes for all strategies that encompass broader measurements of family success such as income, employment, and overall family stability.				
Child-centered Goal Setting Vision: Goal setting is a multifaceted tool that can be used to engage family members in identifying a vision for economic wellbeing and articulating actionable, measurable steps toward achievement.	<i>Lutheran Services in Iowa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families will be encouraged to set a minimum of one child-related goal during program enrollment. <i>Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When appropriate, children will be directly engaged in goal setting. <i>Northeast Iowa Community Action Agency</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will utilize results of the Casey Life Skills Assessment to engage children 14-18 in goal setting. 	July 1, 2019	Pilot Sites	# goals set per child per family # of child-related goals per adult per family
Next Steps:				
Child Care Resources Vision:	<i>Northeast Iowa Community Action Agency</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families will receive a copy of “A Guide to Choosing Quality Childcare” and provided informal education and support to understand and select quality early care and education programs. Families will be connected to the DHS portal for approved providers or referred directly to Child Care Resource and Referral. 	July 1, 2019	Pilot Sites	# families provided with information related to quality child care # employed families with child care barrier that addressed the child care barrier

				# children that accessed early care and education programming by type
Next Steps:				
Family Resource Fair Vision:	Operational Definition <i>Lutheran Services in Iowa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will host regular resource fairs for families at higher income levels or nearing exit that include information on topics of interest and opportunities for peer-to-peer connection and support. 	July 1, 2019	Pilot Sites	# Resource fairs provided # of families that attended resource fairs
Next Steps:				
Engagement / Resources for Children Vision:	Operational Definition <i>Lutheran Services in Iowa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will implement the Nurturing Parenting curriculum for enrolled families. <i>Northeast Iowa Community Action Agency</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For families involved with DHS child welfare / FSRP services, the program will initiate and maintain close collaboration for case planning. The program will offer attendance at all Family Team Meetings, provide resources and support to achieve family safety and case closure goals, and regularly follow-up with families on the status of DHS involvement. All families with an age-eligible child will be connected to an Early Head Start playgroup. The program will tailor efforts to address family-specific barriers to participation, including 	July 1, 2019 November, 2019 August, 2019	Pilot Sites	# parenting lessons provided/completed Pre-/post- changes in the Self-Sufficiency Matrix domains for: 1) Knowledge of Child Development, 2) Nurturing and Attachment # families with an active DHS child welfare case during enrollment # families with an active DHS child

	<p>transportation, scheduling conflicts, and overall comfort level).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will utilize results of the Casey Life Skills Assessment to engage older children in goal setting, referrals and collaboration. <p>Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will implement the Strengthening Families parenting curriculum for enrolled families. The program will offer the Arise curriculum for life skills to older children/teens. 	July, 2019		<p>welfare case that achieved case closure and/or family reunification.</p> <p># families attending EHS play groups; # EHS play groups attended</p> <p># children/teens participating in life skills curriculum</p>
Next Steps:				
<p>Screening and Assessment</p> <p>Vision:</p>	<p>Lutheran Services in Iowa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will implement the AAPI 2.1 Form A & B assessments (required by the Nurturing Parenting curriculum) <p>Northeast Iowa Community Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will informally assess family eligibility for other TANF programs, including the Family Investment Program, and assist families in connecting to those programs as indicated (by eligibility and family preference). The program will implement the Casey Life Skills Assessment for families with children 14-18. <p>Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will implement all screening and assessment tools identified in Family Centered Coaching (a framework developed by The Prosperity Agenda). This will include tools to assess a family's readiness for goal setting and coaching. <p>Operation Threshold</p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will revise screening and assessment process to reflect target population for FaDSS/Non-FIP 			
Next Steps:				
Social Supports	<p>Lutheran Services in Iowa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will provide informal opportunities for peer-to-peer support at regular Family Resource Fairs. Will establish and maintain a Facebook group for enrolled families to facilitate information sharing and peer-to-peer connection and support. <p>Northeast Iowa Community Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will establish and maintain a Facebook group for enrolled families to facilitate information sharing and peer-to-peer connection and support. The program will develop a consent form for participants and a group moderating protocol to ensure positive, effective participation. The program may include an in-person connection for families participating in the Facebook group. <p>Operation Threshold</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will collaborate with NAMI to connect participants to a mental health support group. 	<p>January, 20202</p> <p>August, 2019</p> <p>August, 2019</p>	Pilot Sites	<p># families attending resource fairs / support groups</p> <p># families participating in Facebook groups</p> <p>Pre-/post- changes in Self-Sufficiency Matrix scores for the Support Network domain</p>
Next Steps:				
Financial Literacy	<p>Lutheran Services in Iowa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will explore, identify and implement a financial literacy and asset-building curriculum. <p>Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will implement the 4 Cornerstones curriculum for financial literacy. 	<p>TBD</p> <p>July 1, 2019</p>		<p># financial literacy classes offered</p> <p># families attending financial literacy classes</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will implement Prosperity Agenda's Family Centered Coaching framework for enrolled families. Visit https://theprosperityagenda.org/familycentered-coaching/ for further information. <p>Other Training / Curricula</p> <p><i>Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will offer the Arise curriculum for life skills development to both adults and older children/teens. 	July, 2019		
Next Steps:				

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) – 2-Gen Logic Model

Target Population	Inputs	Activities and Services	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
<p>US Citizen</p> <p>Iowa Resident</p> <p>Dependent child in the household</p> <p>Facing at least one barrier to self-sufficiency *Barriers including, but not limited to parenting skills, financial literacy, asset building</p> <p>Gross income at or below 175% of the federal poverty level based on family size at enrollment</p> <p>Engaging families at higher income levels</p>	<p>Staffing & Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1 FaDSS Program Supervisor -2 FaDSS Specialists -State and local funding streams -Partnership with Dupaco Credit Union <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Categorical eligibility or LiHEAP criterion eligibility <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Nurturing Parenting Certification -Your Money Your Goals/Your Money Your Future: Making Ends Meet <p>Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Docs <p>Direct Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Referrals from places including, but not limited to Public Schools, Public Health, IWD programs, Head Start, Dr. Offices, local organizations, Internal office BHIS and Therapy Programs, asking current families 	<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2 Gen Quarterly goals and Annual Report -Optional: 10 week Nurturing Parenting Curriculum *AAPI 2.1. Form A & B Assessments -Community Resource Sharing events with option for live streaming -Facebook peer-to-peer group -Financial literacy curriculum used 1:1 with families <p>Setting goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -FaDSS Specialists will encourage each family to create at least 1 goal around their children or family throughout enrollment. <p>Home Visit Intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -For families nearing exit as needed home visits, but still need two significant contacts each month <p>Exiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -As family wishes to no longer participate in the program and or when the family has completed all their desired goals or the family reaches 65% of the state median income level based on family size. 	<p># of families referred, eligible, and enrolled in pilot program</p> <p># of families served</p> <p># of home visits each family is receiving</p> <p># of families with individual goals</p> <p>-#/type of assets identified; average per family</p> <p>-#/ type of barriers identified; average per family</p> <p># of collaborating agencies</p> <p># of lessons completed out of the Nurturing Parenting Curriculum</p> <p># of pre and posttests completed for Financial Literacy curriculum</p>	<p>Families who participate in 2 Gen gain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Through in-home visitation families are participating and engaged -Participation in the Nurturing Parenting Curriculum and learning new skills -Families understanding the importance of planning for the future in regards to financial literacy 	<p>Families are more stable and economically self-sufficient while in transition from FIP as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased income employment -increased income/earnings -increased credit scores -savings and checking accounts established for all family members in the household -increased education level -decreased use of other benefits programs (such as: SNAP, HUD, etc.) <p>Nurturing and Attachment-increased reciprocal connections between children and parents</p> <p>Support Network-Healthy support network that is reciprocal</p> <p>Child Develop.-meeting age appropriate needs and application of</p>	<p>The benefits to families who exit FaDSS are sustained, as indicated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -job retention -wage growth -low return to welfare and or other benefit programs - financial stability for the whole family including children participation in financial literacy such as: savings accounts <p>Nurturing Parenting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -age appropriate development -Developing a positive self worth and self-esteem -promoting empathy in children and parents -Developing a healthy sense of empowerment and creating a positive bond with all family members that

					child development skills and activities	strengthen brain development
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Service Delivery

LSI will continue to use its Family Development Model in our 2-Gen approach with emphasis on the family as a whole. Our services will continue with the same core elements including: regular **home visits** with families twice a month for the first 3 months and once a month there after based on family needs. Specialists will continue to perform assessments including, the self-sufficiency matrix at entry and exit, eco-map, strength and needs, relationship assessment, and ASQ's for Child Development using a **strength-based** approach. In addition Specialists will offer each family the opportunity to participate in the 10 week Nurturing Parenting Curriculum to promote a healthy nurturing environment for the family as a whole. For higher income families we will offer financial literacy and asset building to empower financial growth and stability. Specialists will encourage families to plan for their children's financial future, in addition to their own. Specialists will address barriers standing in the way of the family's self-sufficiency, connecting them to any needed resources.

With decreasing Family Investment Program (FIP) numbers Specialists are working to reach unconnected families facing barriers to self-sufficiency. LSI is partnering with referral sources including: public schools, public health, Head Start, LiHEAP, Iowa Workforce Development, and other local organizations. The expanded eligibility includes families meeting the following criteria: US citizenship, Iowa Residency, a dependent child in the home, family facing at least one barrier, and a gross income at or below 175% federal poverty level based on family size.

LSI also plans with joint efforts from DHS, and PROMISE JOBS to ease the program processes for families with better collaboration. This could include activities such as: sharing information like the DHS self-assessment, income and employment verification, access to other program databases, and better communication across providers.

With expanded eligibility and better collaboration across agencies, LSI is working to prevent the generational poverty that affects many families. This will be achieved through reaching the families that previously were not eligible, extended length of enrollment, empowering families to build a positive support network (formal and informal), increased education, and overall family stability.

Mid-Iowa Community Action Agency – 2-Gen Logic Model

Target Population	Inputs	Activities and Services	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Categorical programs automatic eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIHEAP WIC HST/EHS SNAP Families with multiple barriers, and willing to meet weekly with specialist. (focus)- Refugee families	Family Development Specialists Family Centered Coaching Toolkit 2 Gen families will be served in any of MICA's service area FaDSS Funding	Activities and services for the whole family - SERVICES WILL BE DELIVERED THROUGH A FAMILY CENTERED COACHING MODEL (FCC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Family Engagement</i> -Families will complete initial needs survey at beginning of services and at exit to show growth Will create process to incorporate all of MICA's family development programs to provide feedback through a family council to ensure we are providing services families in our area need Families will be assessed on the readiness for coaching Specialists will work with the family through a case management skill set, readiness assessment skill set or goal setting skill set Specialists will use a variety of tools offered through Family Centered Coaching Visits/ face to face contacts will occur weekly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Assessments- varied according to family's needs New tools that will be completed include Who's in my Family, My Hopes and Dreams, Wheel of Life, Plan/Review/Do Goal setting will happen once a family is ready for goals according to FCC Referrals Attending appointments as needed Collaborating with other agencies Available curriculums to be used as needed: <i>Parenting curriculum- Strengthening Families</i> 	# of families enrolled in pilot program # of home visits each family is receiving # of families in case management according to FCC model # referrals/ collaboration for refugee families # of goals completed in a month from families in goal setting according to FCC model # of lessons completed out of Parenting Curriculum # of lessons completed from Life Skills Curriculum # of pre and posttests completed for Financial Literacy curriculum	Through intense family development services-families are engaged quickly Families will start to see benefits of change by identifying barriers and addressing barriers, build on strengths and values Parents are learning parenting skills Children's basic needs are met, they are healthy and safe Adults &Teens learning soft skills/ life skills Adults and Teens learning budgeting and financial literacy skills	Parent skills improved Parents understand milestones Children are meeting developmental milestones Families will be able to create a clear plan to begin and develop the courage to take action Defined education goals and or employment goals Financial Literacy skills improved	Parents have knowledge and confidence to raise healthy and successful children Children attending and thriving in school Adults will have improved earnings from employment Families experience economic stability and achieve upward mobility

		<p><i>Life skills curriculum- Arise Financial Literacy curriculum-4 Cornerstones</i></p> <p>Activities and services for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children have access to quality child care and school• When appropriate children set their <i>own goals</i>				
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Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation – 2-Gen Logic Model

Target Population	Inputs	Activities and Services	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
<p>Iowa Resident and US Citizen OR Permanent Resident</p> <p>Experiencing Poverty (175% or below FPL with primary target at 80% or below FPL)</p> <p>Dependent child in the home</p> <p>Facing barriers to self-sufficiency</p>	<p>NEICAC Family Development team</p> <p>NEICAC Executive Director</p> <p>DHR Program Management</p> <p>FaDSS Contract Funding</p>	<p>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Annual Survey completed during monthly visit or Face to Face contact in January, February, or March -Exit survey completed during monthly visit or face to face contact at home visit up to 3 months prior to exit OR -Exit survey mailed or e-mailed to household at most recent known address or new address if family has relocated. -Utilize poll options and posts on Facebook to gather input on Facebook-page-specific topic desires, home visit services/activities, favorite thing about FaDSS, etc. <p>TANF(FIP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Monitor Eligibility Status for TANF (FIP) at enrollment. -Educate TANF eligible households on the benefits of TANF/PROMISE JOBS services and the support that FaDSS can provide with DHS IMW And PROMISE JOBS (FSSG!) -Support in the application process by offering use of laptop during visit, printing application/required materials for application process, scanning/faxing/e-mailing application and supporting documents to DHS IMW (with appropriate release in place), offer to attend initial FIA appointment on orientation date, etc. <p>DHS CHILD WELFARE:</p>	<p>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>% of adult household members enrolled in FaDSS during the survey period (January-March) who completed an annual survey. *Note, households who exit in January, February, or March will complete the exit survey and NOT the annual survey.</p> <p>Households who enroll in January, February, or March will not complete the annual survey.</p> <p>% of adult household members who exit the FaDSS program from December 2019-June 2020 that completed an exit survey.</p> <p># of posts to the NEICAC FaDSS Facebook Group Page that were created to gather service provision feedback from December 2019-June 2020.</p> <p>TANF(FIP):</p> <p># of FIP-eligible households that received TANF benefits at any time from</p>	<p>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Families provide feedback on FaDSS services through a variety of outlets and at different intervals throughout enrollment.</p> <p>TANF(FIP):</p> <p>Households will have knowledge of and access formal financial supports when necessary.</p> <p>DHS CHILD WELFARE:</p> <p>Households with an active DHS child welfare case will partner with both DHS and FaDSS to work towards safe case closure.</p> <p>TWO-GENERATION FOCUSED:</p> <p>Adult family members will gain knowledge on the benefits of improving social capital, life skills, and child care/safety practices.</p> <p>Children (14-18) will gain knowledge basic</p>	<p>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>Families feel empowered to voice their opinions and do so in an informal manner in addition to our formal practices.</p> <p>TANF(FIP):</p> <p>Households will increase income and reduce connection to TANF benefits</p> <p>DHS CHILD WELFARE:</p> <p>Households with an active DHS Child Welfare Case will maintain custody of their children and reach safe case closure during FaDSS enrollment.</p> <p>TWO-GENERATION FOCUSED:</p> <p>Children and adults in households served by the FaDSS Two-Generation Pilot Project will improve in the areas of social capital, life skills, child welfare, and childcare.</p> <p>Children (14-18) will develop basic life skills</p>	<p>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:</p> <p>The NEICAC FaDSS Program and service provision will be driven by family voice</p> <p>TANF(FIP):</p> <p>Households who exit FaDSS are sustained, as indicated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -job retention -wage growth -low return to welfare and or other benefit programs <p>DHS CHILD WELFARE:</p> <p>Safety and stability will be maintained for all household members.</p> <p>WHOLE FAMILY:</p> <p>Families experience economic stability and achieve upward mobility</p> <p>TWO-GENERATION FOCUSED:</p>

		<p>-Initiate collaboration and when possible maintain collaboration with DHS and/or FSRP providers regarding any open DHS Child Welfare Case</p> <p>-Offer attendance at Family Team Meetings</p> <p>-Provide resources/support that accompany the goals for Safe Case Closure</p> <p>-Discuss case status with participants at home visits and/or during other monthly contacts.</p> <p>WHOLE FAMILY:</p> <p>-Home Visits (2HV/Month for the first 3 months and 1HV/month going forward, pending readiness of family)</p> <p>-Goal Setting</p> <p>-Assessments</p> <p>-Referrals to resources</p> <p>-Advocacy/Support</p> <p>TWO-GENERATION FOCUSED:</p> <p>-Education surrounding Quality Child Care for all households enrolled who indicate a need for childcare at any time during enrollment.</p> <p>-Provide Guide to Choosing Quality Childcare</p> <p>-Caretakers will be connected to the DHS portal for approved providers in their desired geographical area (web link, print-outs brought to visits, mailings, etc.) or connected to CCR&R for referrals.</p> <p>-Promotion of EHS Playgroups:</p> <p>-Reminder/Invite of upcoming playgroup will be posted to FaDSS Facebook Group page</p> <p>-Playgroup will be promoted during monthly contacts/home visits</p> <p>-Exploration of reported barriers to participating and navigation of ways</p>	<p>December 2019-June 2020.</p> <p># of FIP-eligible households that FaDSS assisted to obtain TANF benefits from December 2019-June 2020. (See TANF (FIP) activities).</p> <p>DHS CHILD WELFARE:</p> <p># of households with an active DHS Child Welfare Case from December 2019-June 2020 that maintained custody of their child(ren).</p> <p># of households with an active DHS Child Welfare case from December 2019-June 2020 that regained custody of their child(ren).</p> <p># of households with an active DHS Child Welfare case from December 2019-June 2020 that achieved safe case closure.</p> <p>TWO-GENERATION FOCUSED:</p> <p># of households served, who indicate a need for childcare, that are utilizing a center/preschool, Child Development Home A, B, C1 or C, or Child Care</p>	<p>life skills in the areas of daily living , self-care, relationships & communications, housing & money management, work & study life, careers & education and permanent connections</p>	<p>in the areas of daily living , self-care, relationships & communications, housing & money management, work & study life, careers & education and permanent connections</p>	<p>Whole family units will be strengthened.</p> <p>Children (14-18) will thrive and enter adulthood with confidence and master basic life skills in the areas of daily living , self-care, relationships & communications, housing & money management, work & study life, careers & education and permanent connections</p>
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		<p>to address these barriers (transportation, scheduling conflicts, level of comfort in attendance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expand playgroups to households not enrolled in EHS services. <p>-NEICAC FaDSS Facebook Group page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consider hosting a “meet the faces behind the Facebook Group” night. -Offer opportunities for involvement from group members, Specialists will encourage participation or discuss the Facebook page as appropriate during monthly contacts with participants. -Use poll option on Facebook to gather input from group members <p>-Casey Life Skills Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement first with children age 14-18 in the home -Completion of the assessment may take 2 home visits. -Initial assessment will be completed within the first 120 days of enrollment -Assessment will be updated every 6 months after the initial assessment -Final assessment completed once during the transition to exit FaDSS. -Activities/ resources/ materials related to improving deficient skills identified through the assessment will be provided to adults and child(ren) through HVs and monthly contacts to improve skill level. 	<p>Home approved for Child Care Assistance (Non-Registered Childcare Home)</p> <p># of households served, with children age 0-3, who attend at least two FaDSS/Early Head Start playgroups from December 2019-June 2020.</p> <p>NEICAC FaDSS FACEBOOK GROUP</p> <p># of adult household members who are “members” of the NEICAC FaDSS Facebook Group</p> <p># of posts or comments from participants on the FaDSS Facebook Group page from December 2019-June 2020.</p> <p>CASEY LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT:</p> <p># of children, age 14-18 who improved their basic life skills through assessment with the Casey Life Skills assessment and education provided during FaDSS services.</p>			
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Service Delivery

NEICAC will maintain the foundation of the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program for FIP households with regular **home visits** with families, using a strength-based approach. Core services include **support**, assessment, and goal setting. Support is given in many ways such as

referrals, collaboration with existing service providers, building social capital through community connection and advocacy. **Assessment** aids the family to identify strengths that they possess which may be used to eliminate their barriers to self-sufficiency. **Goal setting** helps families break down goals that seem out of reach into small steps. As goals are achieved over time, family members gain a sense of empowerment and confidence in their ability to reach and maintain their idea of “success”.

With our 2-Generation Pilot Project’s focus on those in deep poverty (80% FPL or below), we are serving some of the most vulnerable households in our communities. We will have the opportunity to connect disconnected households to the TANF (FIP) system when appropriate, implement additional whole-family services, and serve households until they reach 65% of the state median income and truly support households out of poverty (\$49,719 for a family of 3). We will acknowledge and respond to the short-term needs and long-term dreams of the families we serve. A dual-focus on both adults and children in the home is the proven best approach to increasing family stability measures that in return help families to get out of and stay out of poverty.

Operation Threshold logic model

DRAFT

APPENDIX B



Family Focus Group and Staff Input Surveys Report

June, 2018

Prepared for:

Department of Human Rights
Empowering Families Iowa

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DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the key takeaways and themes from the FaDSS family focus groups, FaDSS staff input survey, PROMISE JOBS staff input survey, and frontline staff focus group, all of which focused on three of Iowa's TANF programs: Income Maintenance, PROMISE JOBS, and FaDSS. The 2-Generation Core team, composed of representatives from the Department of Human Services (DHS), Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), and Department of Human Rights (DHR), decided to conduct these activities in order to solicit feedback from those who know the system best, with the goal of making program and system improvements to better serve families and support frontline staff. The questions posed to both staff and families were based on the 2-generation (2-Gen) approach, which at its core is about creating opportunities to address the needs of both children and the adults in their lives together. While some programs within the TANF system are naturally well-suited for this 2-Gen approach, the 2-Gen Core Team is working to create solutions that can help make the entire TANF system more family-centered in order to achieve better child, parent, and whole family outcomes.

Stephanie Crandall, a DHR intern and Masters student at University of Iowa, facilitated the family focus groups on April 7-8, 2018 and the staff focus group on June 19, 2018, with the assistance of Third Sector Capital Partners, Inc.. The content below outlines feedback received from both families and staff. Two family focus groups were held in Burlington on April 7 and two were held in Des Moines on April 8. The first focus group in each location included families currently in the FaDSS program, while the second included families that had exited the program. The staff focus group was held in Des Moines, with FaDSS and PROMISE Jobs frontline staff representation from across the state.

Kelly Davydov, FaDSS Program Manager, sent an 11-question survey to all FaDSS frontline staff and leadership on March 6, 2018. The survey remained open until March 23rd, and had a response rate of just under 50%, with a total of 48 staff members completing the survey. The staff questionnaire was developed with an appreciative inquiry lens, with the expertise of Dr. Cassandra Dorius from Iowa State University, and posed open-ended questions related to FaDSS program impact, cross-system collaboration, and whole family outcomes.

Iowa Workforce Development implemented its own version of the same survey for PROMISE JOBS (PJ) frontline staff with a similar set of 11 questions. The survey remained open from April 19 - 26, 2018, and had a response rate of 37% (with a total of 40 staff completing the survey). The questions again maintained an appreciative inquiry approach and focused on PJ program impact, cross-system collaboration, and whole family outcomes.

ANALYSIS

The family focus groups, staff input surveys, and staff focus group results shared several key themes. First, it became clear that both families and staff seek reduced and streamlined reporting/paperwork requirements. FaDSS workers expressed a discontent with reporting requirements, as the time spent on paperwork often cut into time spent with families and caused undue stress. PJ workers expressed a similar sentiment, as they sought a reduction in responsibilities and additional paperwork that interfered with case management time. Families, on the other hand, felt that they were forced to fill out the same forms multiple times for different programs, and were frustrated when their paperwork was lost or mishandled. Second, all three groups expressed a desire for increased collaboration and training across TANF programs. Families and staff believed that FaDSS, PJ, and IM workers could benefit from

increased exposure to 2-Gen approaches and increased knowledge on other programs' policies, in order to improve customer service, communication, and collaboration. And finally, all stakeholder groups appreciated being asked about their experience and had a desire to continue being heard.

Key Takeaways from Family Focus Groups

The family focus groups explored the intersection of FIP, PJ, and FaDSS, and the challenges associated with navigating the TANF system. Due to the fact that discussions were framed using a 2-Gen lens, feedback varied drastically across programs. This was largely expected as certain programs are less equipped to take a 2-Gen approach due to challenges, such as program restrictions and federal compliance requirements. There are clear opportunities, however, for TANF programs to work together to overcome these constraints, and find ways to better serve whole families.

During the focus group discussions, several themes were shared across all four focus groups; however, key differences also emerged between the experiences of rural and urban participants. Families also generally spoke of FIP and PJ as a combined entity and service. Focus group participants were often unable to differentiate between their PJ worker and FIP worker, and due to this, challenges with FIP were sometimes attributed to PJ and vice versa. This view of FIP and PJ as combined, even though they are operated out of two different agencies, is important to note throughout the rest of this document.

Theme 1: Rural and urban participants experience different levels of service from the PROMISE JOBS program. Overall, families in the rural focus groups had a much more positive experience with PJ. Rural participants reported being in contact (via phone, text, or in-person) with their PJ workers on a much more frequent basis, and also generally felt like their worker was understanding and flexible to family needs. For example, one rural parent explained, "My PJ worker is understanding about rescheduling. I try and call her cell phone 24 hours in advance to set a new time and date...and she's really helpful...she doesn't want to be another barrier."

Rural participants also recognized a high level of collaboration between their FaDSS and FIP workers, further contributing to their positive view of PJ. Urban participants, on the other hand, struggled with PJ customer service and inflexibility. For example, one participant explained, "I feel like a lot of PJ workers don't want to be there. They make me feel like I am beneath them, and they put everyone in the same bucket, instead of trying to understand a person's story."

Though most participants voiced concerns about lack of compassion and mindfulness of family needs, a number of those in the urban focus groups expressed satisfaction and gratitude for PJ's assistance with completing school. In addition, participants also recognized the limitations imposed on the program due to budget cuts and compliance, but expressed frustration that the program was unable to meet their family's needs and goals.

Theme 2: Families across all four focus groups had positive views and experiences with FaDSS.

Participants described their FaDSS worker as a confidant, coach, teammate, counselor, and ultimate resource for not only themselves, but their entire family. FaDSS workers helped connect participants to a wide range of services, from free furniture, to job opportunities, to jackets for the winter. Many families also accessed general assistance through the Community Action Agency, because of their participation in FaDSS. This was one of the most frequently mentioned and most appreciated services, as participants noted how easy and streamlined the process was compared to other government

services. Focus group participants expressed a deep trust and belief in their FaDSS worker, due to the individualized and compassionate service they provided.

Theme 3: Parents consistently mentioned childcare and transportation as the biggest barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. With respect to childcare, families expressed difficulty when they were automatically transitioned from DHS childcare assistance to IWD childcare assistance after joining PJ, others struggled with the number of childcare units they were provided and the rules associated with those units, and others could not find childcare providers that were well-suited to their family's needs. Barriers related to transportation were also mentioned across all four focus groups. Participants expressed difficulty with accessing any form of transportation (public or otherwise), paying for insurance and vehicle maintenance, and leveraging the available resources from PJ or FaDSS.

Key Takeaways from FaDSS Staff Input Survey

The staff input survey asked a total of eleven open-ended questions, and the respondents' answers revealed several key takeaways. The methodology used to analyze survey results involved the coding of qualitative data, which is a way of labeling and organizing responses for analysis. The textual data was reviewed systematically using both pre-set and emergent codes. This methodology helped uncover trends in the data, and created a framework with which to view the raw survey responses.

Theme 1: The survey revealed that FaDSS staff are incredibly passionate about serving families. This passion drives staff members' everyday interactions with clients and tendency to go above and beyond. This same passion also lay at the heart of staff desire to be more involved with program decision making and with families. It is also important to note that those most passionate about their work may have been more likely to respond to the survey, resulting in a self-selection bias.

Theme 2: FaDSS staff desire increased collaboration across TANF agencies and programs. Over 1/3 of respondents mentioned increasing communication between FaDSS, PJ, and Income Maintenance staff in response to three different questions. For example, one respondent explained, "the more interactive we are with PROMISE JOBS and DHS, the easier it becomes to navigate the system...therefore more open communication/sensitivity training is needed on all sides." FaDSS staff mentioned wanting increased training across the entire TANF system in order to improve mutual understanding and increase service coordination. Several staff members also suggested that FaDSS could do a better job of sharing its 2-Gen learnings and mindset with PJ and IM workers.

Theme 3: Staff seek more streamlined processes and a reduced reporting burden. Over 20% of staff mentioned wanting "less reporting" in response to two different questions. One staff member stated, "Honestly, [I wish there was] less paperwork. I am often more stressed about the amount of paperwork and requirements I have than a family in crisis." The desire for less paperwork was intimately tied with the staff's passion for the work as they sought a change in order to be more focused on families and their needs in crisis.

Key Takeaways from PROMISE JOBS Staff Input Survey

The staff input survey asked a total of eleven open-ended questions, and the respondents' answers revealed three central themes. The methodology used to analyze survey results mirrored the process that was taken for the FaDSS staff input survey, and it involved the coding of survey responses using pre-set and emergent codes.

Theme 1: Staff seek increased time with clients in order to build stronger client relationships. Over 20% of respondents mentioned this theme on three separate occasions, as staff offered several solutions to allow staff to focus on more interactive case management. Several staff suggested decreased caseloads, others mentioned more streamlined reporting, and still others wanted a decrease in other office responsibilities in order to focus on PJ service delivery. One staff member explained, “allow us to focus on PJ program more, rather than dividing attention to other “jobs” like unemployment, 866, business services, etc...Less than 50% of my time is spent on PJ and I have over 100 clients.”

Theme 2: Staff want better collaboration with FaDSS and Income Maintenance, and they primarily proposed three main solutions. The most frequently mentioned suggestion was the co-location of FaDSS, PJ, and IM in the same building in order to make communication and coordination easier. Staff members also expressed a desire for joint meetings with FaDSS and IM, including: FaDSS attendance at PJ orientation, a joint home visit between FaDSS and PJ, and even FaDSS attendance at every PJ meeting. Finally, over 30% of respondents mentioned a shared system with automatic document sharing and notifications in order to decrease e-mail traffic and enable instantaneous information sharing.

Theme 3: Staff have a desire for increased training and support. This includes training to better equip PJ staff with the skills to better support families, as well as training to other TANF agency staff to better inform them of what and why PJ staff do what they do. For example, one respondent explained, “We would have shared PJ/FaDSS...trainings to function more as a “team” working together for the same goal. There would be an awareness that PJ has to follow rules and guidelines. Right now it seems like more often than not FaDSS workers have a perception that PJ workers are “out to LBP” parents and portray this negative image to shared customers.” Finally, PJ staff also expressed wanting increased clarity on program guidelines and policies and support via an updated program manual.

Key Takeaways from Frontline Staff Focus Groups

The Frontline Staff Focus Group built on the findings from the family focus groups and staff input surveys described above, with the goal of brainstorming and refining additional program and system improvements. Leveraging the existing data collected as a starting point enabled the collection of more detailed and nuanced feedback and helped lead to the creation of concrete ideas and refinements to pilot. In addition, participating staff also appreciated that tangible follow up and actions were being taken with the initial surveys results.

Theme 1: Staff seek increased collaboration across FaDSS and PJ and have tangible ideas to enable it. Frontline focus group staff echoed the sentiments expressed by staff survey results, reinforcing their desire for cross-program collaboration and communication. Ideas for enabling this included: a shared system to share documents, more frequent cross-program meetings for frontline staff, and cross-program trainings on program rules and guiding principles. Though participants recognized that such activities may take additional time or effort in the short-term, staff saw the value add for both staff and, importantly, families in the long-term.

Theme 2: The differing program mandates of FaDSS and PJ influenced staff viewpoints on accountability, enforcement, and flexibility. A number of PJ and FaDSS staff held different opinions regarding the right balance between flexibility and enforcement, sometimes leading to a tension between the two programs. This became especially evident during discussions related to DHS “hardship” designations as well as work hour requirements. The differing program missions of FaDSS and PJ also influenced staff viewpoints about their role in adopting 2-Gen principles and their role in participants’ lives more generally.

Theme 3: Staff seek consistency in policy interpretation and practice across both FaDSS and PJ. One PJ staff member explained, “we all do it our own way, which is hard for staff and must be hard for FaDSS; there must be a way to streamline it.” The inconsistency between workers and service areas not only sounded challenging to staff, but also had significant 2-Gen implications as variances in policy interpretation and practice was especially frequent for child-related topics (e.g. child attendance at meetings, child’s mental health). Staff also recognized, however, that some workers and providers have interpreted existing rules/guidelines in a family-centered fashion, and sought widespread adoption and consistency of those interpretations.

CONCLUSION

The planning and execution of the family focus groups, staff input surveys, and staff focus group required a substantial dedication of staff time and effort. These activities, however, not only resulted in various learnings, but also helped strengthen the state’s commitment to soliciting feedback and including staff and family voices in the improvement process. The analyses in this report outline common themes and sentiments shared by both the families and staff members who participated. These commonalities provide an opportunity to create actionable changes and program adjustments that could improve the experiences of all three stakeholder groups. The Iowa 2-Gen Steering Committee and 2-Gen Core Team have the chance to seize this opportunity to create meaningful changes to improve both family outcomes and staff satisfaction at the same time.